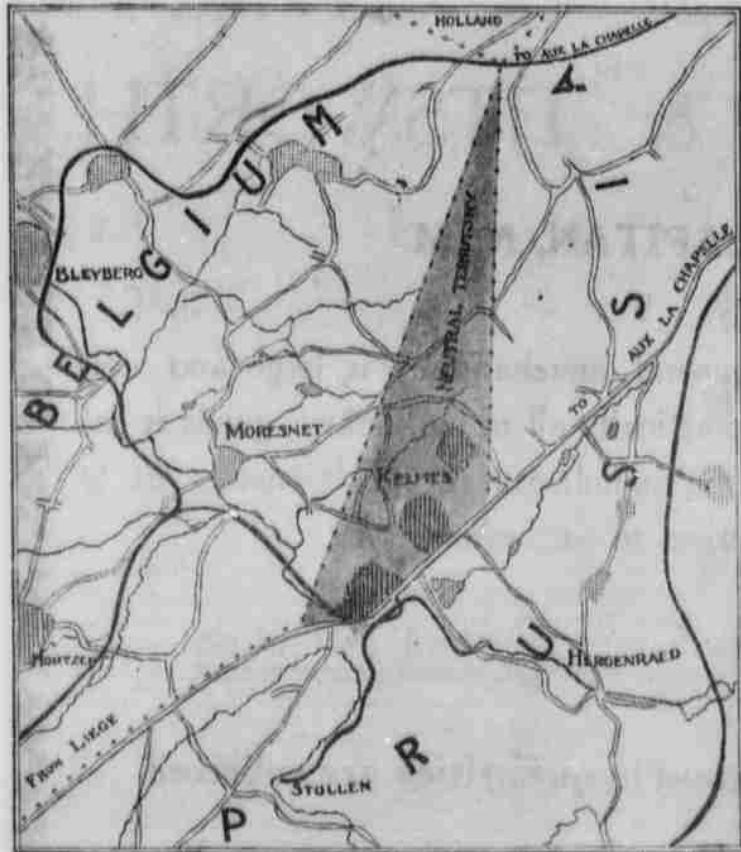


Neutral Territory of Moresnet

TUCKED away in the very heart of central Europe, where the vast armies of half a dozen nations are fighting the biggest war in history, is one of the smallest and strangest territories in the world, known officially as the Neutral Territory of Moresnet. An encircling ridge of high mountains veritably buries it from neighboring civilization and culture and leaves it in a little world of its own. But it is not so strange. It is the fact that, for nearly a century, the inhabitants have never experienced the feeling of being under the rule of an emperor, king or president. They are independent, governed by no one, at liberty to do as they please, for, after the Vienna congress of 1815 Moresnet was granted an independent constitution, guaranteed by Prussia and Belgium. Only 1½ square miles in extent its land worth, perhaps, is greater per square foot than that of any other sovereign state. In the interior is one of the richest zinc mines in the world, which years of active working have failed to exhaust.

A large percentage of the inhabitants of the territory are miners. Few venture beyond the confines of the quiet little valley, though the bustling commercial city of Aix-la-Chapelle is but five miles away to the northeast, and Liège lies only 28 miles westward.



MAP OF MOSESNET

The population has grown since 1815 from 250 to more than 3,000.

How It Is Governed.

The local government of Moresnet during its hundred years of life is interesting. When Belgium and Prussia each said "hands off" in 1815, each country secretly intended to keep one eye on the territory. This policy was carried out until 1841. Under the arrangement the neutral state was subject to a joint government by both nations. In 1841 Moresnet received an administration of its own. A burgomaster, or mayor, and a council of ten members was the form of rule selected.

Since 1841 the state has worked out its own affairs. Nominally the burgomaster is appointed alternately by Belgium and Prussia, but in reality and practice the Moresnetians choose their own executive. The council members obtain their offices at a village election every year.

The inhabitants so inclined decide individually whether they will perform military duty for Prussia or for Belgium, and the result has been a nearly even division, with Belgium getting a shade of advantage. It is interesting to speculate just how many fathers and sons, brothers and cousins are now fighting against each other, and how much consternation must have been caused in Moresnet by the German declaration of war on Belgium.

The inhabitants also decide whether they will accept the jurisdiction of Prussian or of Belgian courts. As a

result, the wrongdoers of Moresnet choose in such a way as to suffer as lightly as possible.

Moresnet boasts of no customs or tariffs. Belgian and German goods can go in or out of the territory without restriction. However, to prevent goods of one nation from being stored in Moresnet for a couple of days and then sent over the other boundary freed from duty, both countries keep customs officials on the watch.

Land taxes are also divided between Belgium and Prussia.

Within the last 15 years Prussia has shown an inclination to depart from her long policy of noninterference, and has harried Moresnet with two main objectives. She has sought to compel the people of the little territory to declare their desire to become German subjects, and has also striven to drive the government of Belgium into surrendering its rights. Far beyond any expectations, Moresnet citizens have staunchly upheld their independence, maintaining that the compact between Prussia and Belgium should never be severed. Belgium has also remained stolid, even refusing to relinquish her claims in exchange for a substantial indemnity.

There have even been some in Belgium whose doctrine it was to surrender Moresnet, with the natural expectation that Germany would, by

LURE OF STRENGTH

By IDA SPEED.

(Copyright.)

They were about half a mile away when they saw the cowboy at the wire fence waiting for them.

He had dismounted and was standing by his pony feeling a little nervous for about the first time in his cow-punching existence.

Bonita was so young. He could see from there how erect she sat her little blue pony, and he knew how fetching she could look at one from beneath that turned-down Mexican hat.

All the long afternoon she'd been glancing at him thus, and after that—something caught in his strong, muscular throat—after that she would be his beyond the power of law or parental persuasion.

He could see her little gauntleted hand now raised above her head in salute. He waved back and presently jerked loose the three strands of wire which here stapled into the crooked cedar post and stood on them while she rode out of her father's ranch properties.

"Let 'em up, Jim," said the homely, bald-headed man who had accompanied her this far. "This lets me out. It's me for the ranch."

"Good-by—oh, and thank you, Baldy," said the girl, smiling at him. "We'll do as much for you some day."

"Be good, and if you can't be good, be pretty," admonished Jim, as he mounted.

"Adios," called Baldy, ignoring his friend, "and good luck to you," and jabbing his spurs into his pony he was gone in the direction whence he had just come.

The man and girl rode on toward the south. He looked her over affectionately.

She rode true western fashion, well back in her saddle, heels down, and toes pointed out. Behind her a bundle was tied by the leather thongs of the saddle.

"Beauty," he said caressingly, "did you have trouble gettin' away from Mll and stepmother?"

"Not a bit," she said, and tossed her head. "Baldy called to me to come ahead if I was goin' to Uncle Ben's to stay all night and he'd ride as far as the south pasture fence with me. And he did," she laughed, intoxicated with the bravado of their plan for elopement.

"Baldy's a good old button," said Jim, delightedly.

They rounded an undulating bit of prairie and in the distance, to the right, a windmill came in view.

"We'll go by the shack," he said, "and you can rest a while."

But before they reached it, there were two hours of riding in the beating July sun.

They had turned toward the west now and sometimes Jim held his big cowboy hat before her face to shield her eyes from the glare.

The heat waves rose and danced on the surface of the shrubbery, the crickets and locusts chirped in unceasing, monotonous strain.

Then the exuberance of Bonita's spirits died out gradually until she was only a tired little maid with sun-burnt cheeks and lips almost blistered in the intense heat.

He tried to cheer her with plans for the future and many yarns of the sort which hitherto had held her spell-bound.

Sometimes an irresistible yearning toward her swept over him, and he reached out for her hand on the bridle rein and crushed it in his own big, rough paw. Once he rode near enough to bend over and kiss her cheek.

When they reached his shack at last Bonita had become indifferent.

She protested feebly that they ought not to go in, but she was tired and hot and allowed herself after all to be lifted down from her saddle and almost carried in the house.

It was a one-room shack of rough lumber, with a lean-to kitchen in the rear.

There was a bed in one corner with a decent quilt and two pillows with snowy slips. The floor was brushed clean, and two empty cracker boxes, in lieu of chairs, was all the room contained, except a small zinc trunk.

Jim went for a fresh bucket of water, and as Bonita stared about her, the last remnant of romance slipped away and she was seized with a complete revulsion of feeling.

She pictured the big, low-ceiled rooms of the ranch house of her father, the dainty muslin curtains, the piano, the comfortable rocking chairs, and the new velvet-covered davenport folding 'd of which she and Mll had been so proud.

Jim returned with the water. For want of a chair, the weary girl had dropped down on the side of the bed and half-reclined against a pillow. He dipped up a dripping cupful and gave it to her, setting the bucket on one of the boxes.

She drank long and deeply, and as he watched her there in his house, sitting on his bed, all the hunger and loneliness and untutored desire in his being swelled up.

He dropped on his knees beside her, and threw his arms about her, holding her close, drawing her face down to his and covering it with kisses, which in his rough tenderness, he rained on cheek and lips, and eyes and brow.

"You are mine—mine!" he said softly and huskily.

At another time she would have surrendered happily, but in her present mood, the remoteness of the spot, their absolute aloofness from human contact, the bareness of this, his home, alarmed her.

In a panic she fought him off.

She flung the cup across the room, splattering the clean boards of the floor with the remaining drops.

"Oh!" she cried, "I want to go back, Jim. I'm afraid! I can't cook and wash, and—and all the rest. I don't want to marry you—or anybody. I want to ride and have beaux and sleep with Mll!"

He was on his feet beside her now, with a different look on his strong features. His crooked mouth was almost a straight line. His eyes were serious with purpose.

"Little girl," he said in a slow, hurt voice, "we'll go on to the Pitchfork ranch tonight. If you are of the same opinion tomorrow, I'll take you home. As for the work here, and—and the rest, I hadn't thought of your mindin' that."

"I had meant to help. I had expected to give you every minute of my time that I could spare from makin' a livin' for us both. I had wanted to devote it all to makin' you happy. I love you! But it's up to you."

And so they rode on in silence until sundown, when they came to the home ranch of the Pitchfork outfit and Bonita was taken into the arms of old Mrs. Durkin, who thought they were there to make her a friendly visit, and mildly remonstrated with them for not coming sooner.

Bonita was tired and distraught, and went to bed early. "Good night" was the only thing Jim had said to her from the time they arrived. She was homesick and pensive.

Next morning after breakfast she was on the back porch watching the group of men at the hitching post.

In fringed "chaps" and with a blue bandanna knotted about his neck, Jim was leaning against a wagon wheel with his hat pulled down over his face and an air of utter dejection about him.

"Are you goin' to try Old Eagle, Jim?" asked a heavy-set man.

"I don't know," said Jim, "but I can ride him."

It behooves a man to talk discreetly in a country where he has to prove every boast and threat. But he was in no mood to fear danger.

So he hung down his cigarette, took his rope from where it was fastened to his saddle which lay on the ground, and turned toward the corral without a word.

"What you goin' to do?" called one. "Hide him," answered laconic Jim. And sulking the action to the word, he roped the old sorrel, and, after some trouble, got the saddle on him, and mounted.

The outlaw plunged and pitched a few times, then reared on his hind legs and fell back. Jim hit the ground on his—feet!

And when Old Eagle rolled over, he set his high-heeled boot on the saddle-horn and held him still.

Then the air was penetrated by a girlish treble.

"Jim," it called, "make those men let you have your saddle. It's gettin' hot."

Bonita was standing on the porch, from which vantage point she had breathlessly watched her lover's performance.

Jim made for the house, and when he arrived she handed him a dipper of water from out of the canvas-covered water bucket which was suspended by a wire from the porch ceiling.

The drops of sweat rolled from his face down on his neck where the strong muscles moved as he swallowed.

The pride of possession filled her. She fanned him coquettishly with a ridiculous little Japanese fan.

Mrs. Durkin appeared in the doorway, wearing a green-checked gingham apron, her spectacles on top of her gray head.

Bonita was looking very maternal and solicitous.

"You shouldn't have got so hot, Jim," she said, authoritatively. "We have a long ride before us."

"Why, mercy me, honey," said old Mother Durkin, "you're not goin' home this mornin'! Why, you've skeeredy got here!"

"No, we're not goin' home," said Bonita, positively, with her new air of assurance. "We're goin' to town to get married, and it's a good time miles. Saddle up the horses at once, Jim."

Jim let the dipper slide back into the bucket with a splash and hurried to the corral, while old Mrs. Durkin folded Bonita in her capacious, motherly arms.

HAS APPROVAL OF ALL

NO MISTAKE POSSIBLE WHEN A SPONGE CAKE IS PROVIDED.

Method of Preparation Carefully Given by an Expert Who Knows Just How It Should Be Put Together for Best Results.

One of the finest little things for the expert housewife to know is how to take certain portions of flour, eggs and sugar and whip them swiftly into the shape of sponge cake. Is there any man, woman or child of right mind who does not like a properly baked "sponge cake"? Echo answers none. An old hand furnished the Star with the necessary method in careful detail. Here it is:

The proper requisites for cake baking are some deep, round-bottomed bowls for mixing, one to be large enough to hold entire mixture when done; a regulation graded one-half pint measuring cup, standard tea and tablespoon, a good perforated mixing spoon, flat egg whip and revolving egg beater.

The correct molds for cake are so constructed that they require no greasing; a German "spring form" or those with removable slides where a knife can be slipped in to cut out the cake are the best; if round molds are used select those with a tube in center; they hold up the delicate mixture while raising and cut more evenly.

The object of ungreased molds is twofold. It is decidedly cleaner, and cake baked that way is more delicate. As the batter rises it clings to slides and tube and stays there until cut out, while a greased mold lets cake slide down and sag even during the baking. The egg cakes should be inverted with the mold as soon as taken from the oven and allowed to hang while cooling; this stretches the cake and increases it materially in size.

When whipping whites for cakes always use a flat egg whip and use it with long even stroke; this incloses air and makes cake light; on the other hand, for icings or meringue a revolving egg beater should be used, as a close-grained consistency is desired for that purpose. When told to fold in sugar or flour use a flat whip or spoon and combine material with a dipping motion, never beat, whip or stir at that stage, or cake will be tough. The care of these light cakes while baking can be summed up as follows: The first ten to twenty minutes the heat should be moderate, the cake must rise slowly to top of pan without browning, then heat can be increased. At all times watch carefully. As soon as oven gets too hot open oven door and let hot air escape; this will change the temperature at once.

Do not be afraid that cold air may chill cake. As the hot air escapes it will keep the cold from penetrating. A few asbestos sheets are useful to place above or below cake if 1. browns too fast. To ascertain when cakes are done press top with finger tips. If it rebounds without making a hissing sound and the cake has shrunk slightly, it is done. Take from oven, carefully invert the mold, being careful that no draft can strike it, and let stand until cold. When cake has been cut from mold place inverted on flat plate, rub off the little loose furry particles that may be on sides and top, then cake is ready for icing.

As a last caution to the inexperienced cook let no any never substitute other material for that called for in these recipes; especially does this apply to the flour. Pastry flour is so superior to the "spring wheat" for all cakes and pastry that the small difference in price should not be considered. Granulated sugar must be fine grained, and be sure to note the difference in "powder and confectioner's sugar"—the former is extremely fine grained and used in baking, while the latter is smooth like starch and is best for icing, etc.—Washington Star.

Soak Fish.

Always soak fresh fish in a quart of water to which a teaspoonful of salt has been added—or more salt and water in proportion. Then rinse it well and dry it carefully with a clean cloth.

To Get Rid of Mice.

Cayenne pepper is excellent to rid cupboards of mice. The floor should be gone over carefully, and each hole stopped up with a piece of rag dipped in water and then in cayenne pepper.

For Cleaning Forks.

A little wooden-tined fork, each time bound with cloth, is used to clean forks. The tines of the wooden fork are run between those of the forks to be cleaned, and they remove every speck of soil.

Soda for White Furniture.

White furniture is best cleaned by being wiped with a soft cloth moistened in a solution of baking soda—a teaspoonful of soda to a pint of warm water—and rubbed with a dry cloth afterward.